



# VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

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WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

ENGINEERING  
DEPARTMENT

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January 14, 2015

Re: Petition regarding improved safety measures

Dear Petitioners:

Thank you for taking the time to put your requests for pedestrian improvements in writing and for submitting the corresponding petition. The Village is always looking for ways to make our streets more pedestrian friendly so we welcome the continued dialogue with you on this important subject.

Upon receiving your petition, a group consisting of Wilmette's Village Manager, Assistant Village Manager, Police Chief, Director of Public Works and I met to discuss your petition. There was consensus among our group on a couple of important points. First, we acknowledge that high volume arterials like Lake Avenue and Skokie Boulevard make pedestrian and bike travel a challenge. We also agree that there is room for some improvements to enhance safety. Most importantly, however, we agree that the safest route for pedestrians to get from the Sprucewood neighborhood to west of Skokie Boulevard is Hibbard Road to Lake Avenue. This is consistent with the message Deputy Police Chief Perkins and I expressed to several members of your group when we met in summer. We strongly encourage your families to use Hibbard Road as the preferred north/south alternate route to Skokie Boulevard.

A central focus of your petition is to improve school walking routes and traffic circulation for Avoca West School. The school is located in a subdivision that unfortunately is not optimally designed for the volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated by the school. In order to develop a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and possible solutions, the Villages of Wilmette and Glenview are working together to hire a traffic consultant to perform a study of school access and circulation. We will share the planned scope of services prior to starting any work. Our goal is to complete the study this spring.

Your petition acknowledges that the majority of your requested improvements are on roads owned by the state and county. Skokie Boulevard and the Lake Avenue overpass are owned by the state and managed by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Illinois Road and Lake Avenue are owned by Cook County and managed through their Department of Transportation and Highways (CCDTH). All of the projects requested in your petition will require some level of multi-agency cooperation.

The following paragraphs will provide the Village's position on the specific items requested in the petition.

1. Painted Crosswalk with Pedestrian Push Buttons

Skokie Boulevard and Hibbard Road: Pedestrian upgrades, including marked crosswalks, ADA accessible sidewalk ramps and pedestrian signal upgrades are included in the federally funded intersection improvements scheduled for 2016.

Skokie Boulevard and Lake Avenue: The Village will work with IDOT on crosswalk maintenance at this intersection. Long term, the Village will discuss an intersection modernization project with CCDTH and IDOT. Given the high cost of an intersection modernization, any improvements will likely be grant funded.

Lake Avenue and Hibbard Road: The Village will work with CCDTH on crosswalk maintenance and pedestrian upgrades at this intersection.

Edens Plaza entrance on Lake Avenue: The Village will work with IDOT and CCDTH on crosswalk maintenance and pedestrian upgrades at this intersection.

Edens Plaza entrance on Skokie Boulevard: The Village will work with IDOT on crosswalk maintenance and pedestrian upgrades at this intersection.

Please note that while the Village supports painted crosswalks and pedestrian upgrades at the locations above, improvements require the support of and approval from Cook County and the State of Illinois.

2. New Sidewalk on the East Side of Skokie Boulevard from Illinois Road to Lake Avenue

A sidewalk in this location will require a significant setback from the east curb line to create separation between the northbound travel lane and pedestrians. As such, the installation of a new sidewalk will be challenging because of the vegetation on the north end of the corridor that provides screening to the residents who back to Skokie Boulevard. This screening serves an important function in reducing vehicle noise from Skokie Boulevard and the Edens Expressway. Accordingly, any changes to the landscape will need to take into consideration the impact on these households. We suggest that this sidewalk be considered when Skokie Boulevard comes due for reconstruction.

In the meantime, the Village encourages pedestrians use Hibbard Road as the preferred parallel route.

3. Curb Maintenance at Skokie and Hibbard Intersection

This intersection will be completely rebuilt in 2016, including the northwest corner.

4. New Traffic Signal at Lake Avenue and Sherwood Road

This request will be reviewed as part of the aforementioned traffic study. Please note that the location of the proposed signal is within the Village of Glenview and under the jurisdiction of Cook County.

5. Flashing Stop Sign at Illinois Road and Hibbard Road

The accident rate at this location is low and the Police Department notes that driver stop sign compliance is high. Based on these facts, Wilmette staff does not believe flashing stop signs are warranted.

6. Connection from Avoca West to West Park Drive

This request will be reviewed as part of the aforementioned traffic study. Please note that the proposed path crosses land controlled by the Union Pacific Railroad and ComEd. Construction easements, permits and long term leases will be required from these agencies if a connection is recommended.

7. Widening the Lake Avenue Overpass

This request will be reviewed as part of the traffic study. Please note that the bridge over the Edens Expressway is under the jurisdiction of IDOT.

In summary, Wilmette and Glenview are in the process of engaging the services of a traffic engineer to perform a comprehensive review of traffic and pedestrian facilities serving Avoca West. In addition, Wilmette will contact the CCDTH and IDOT to discuss the improvements outlined in the petition. These agencies are copied on this letter so they will have a preview of your requests. Thank you again for taking the time to organize the petition and for your patience as we work toward a resolution.

Sincerely,

  
Brigitte Ann Berger, P.E.  
Director of Engineering Services

C: President Bob Bielinski and Village Board of Trustees  
Larry Suffredin, Cook County Commissioner  
John Fortman, IDOT District I Engineer  
John Yonan, Cook County Director of Transportation and Highways  
Dr. Kevin Jauch, Superintendent Avoca District 37  
Joe Kenney, Glenview Director of Community Development  
Timothy J. Frenzer, Village Manager  
Mike Braiman, Assistant Village Manager  
Brian King, Police Chief  
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